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THE *MAMLŪK* INSTITUTION IN EARLY MUSLIM INDIA*

By PETER JACKSON

When Muslim forces under the Ghurid sultan, Mu'izz al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Sām, made their first major breakthrough into Hindūstān in the 1190s, they brought with them two institutions that had long since taken root in the Islamic world. One was the *iqṭā'*, or assignment of land or its revenue, in some cases in return for military service (sometimes misrepresented as "fief" on the Western European model).¹ The other was the *mamlūk*, or military slave. *Mamlūk* status, it should be stressed, bore none of the degrading connotations associated with other types of slavery: *mamlūks* – generally Turks from the Eurasian steppelands – were highly prized by their masters, receiving both instruction in the Islamic faith and a rigorous training in the martial arts, and were not employed in any menial capacity. The *mamlūk* institution, whose origins go back to the first century of Islam, came into vogue from the first half of the third/ninth century, as the 'Abbasid Caliphs built up a corps of Turkish *mamlūk* guards and their example was followed, with the disintegration of their empire, by the various autonomous dynasties that sprang up in the provinces.² Turkish slave officers themselves went on

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Abbreviations:

ARIE	<i>Annual Report on Indian Epigraphy</i>
BSO(A)S	<i>Bulletin of the School of Oriental (and African) Studies</i>
CAJ	<i>Central Asiatic Journal</i>
EP ²	<i>The Encyclopaedia of Islam</i> , new ed. by Ch. Pellat <i>et al.</i> (Leiden, 1954– in progress)
JA	<i>Journal Asiatique</i>
RCEA	<i>Répertoire chronologique d'épigraphie arabe</i> , ed. Ét. Combe <i>et al.</i> (Cairo, 1931– in progress)

¹ See Cl. Cahen, "L'évolution de l'*iqṭā'* du ix^e au xiii^e siècle. Contribution à une histoire comparée des sociétés médiévales", *Annales: économies sociétés, civilisations*, viii (1953), pp. 25–52, repr. in his *Les peuples musulmans dans l'histoire médiévale* (Damascus, 1977), pp. 231–69; A. K. S. Lambton, "Reflections on the *iqṭā'*", in George Makdisi (ed.), *Arabic and Islamic Studies in Honor of Hamilton A. R. Gibb* (Leiden, 1965), pp. 358–76, repr. in her *Theory and Practice in Medieval Persian Government* (London, 1980); C. E. Bosworth, "Barbarian incursions: the coming of the Turks into the Islamic world", in D. S. Richards (ed.), *Islamic Civilisation 950–1150* (Oxford, 1973), pp. 14–15, repr. in his *The Medieval History of Iran, Afghanistan and Central Asia* (London, 1977).

² David Ayalon, "Preliminary remarks on the *Mamlūk* military institution in Islam", in V. J. Parry and M. E. Yapp (eds), *War, Technology and Society in the Middle East* (Oxford, 1975), pp. 44–58, repr. in his *The Mamlūk Military Society* (London, 1979); Patricia Crone, *Slaves on Horses: the Evolution of the Islamic Polity* (Cambridge, 1980); Daniel Pipes, *Slave Soldiers and Islam: the Genesis of a Military System* (New Haven and London, 1981); Bosworth, "Barbarian incursions", pp. 4–10.

to found dynasties, as in the case of the Tulunids and the Ikhshidids in Egypt and the Ghaznawids in the eastern Iranian world. The institution surely entered upon its heyday in the seventh/thirteenth century, with the military coup of 648/1250 in Cairo: a group of *mamlūk* officers overthrew the last Ayyubid sultan of Egypt and inaugurated a regime in which slave status was the essential qualification for high military and administrative office. This polity – the “Mamlūk Sultanate” *par excellence* – has to its credit the successful defence of Egypt and Syria against the pagan Mongols and the elimination of the Christian states on the eastern Mediterranean littoral; it was also remarkable for its longevity, surviving until the Ottoman conquest in 922–3/1516–17.

The Delhi state too has been designated as a “Mamlūk Sultanate” with regard to the first nine decades of its history. It was founded by *mamlūks*: Quṭb al-Dīn Aybeg, one of the numerous Turkish slaves whom the Ghurid Mu‘izz al-Dīn is known to have accumulated,³ and Aybeg’s own slave Shams al-Dīn Iltutmish. For much of the seventh/thirteenth century it rested upon an élite corps of Turkish *mamlūks*, who largely provided the military leadership, the provincial governors and the great officers of state. It is of course misleading to speak of Mamlūk or Slave “dynasties” at either Cairo or Delhi. Only one Egyptian Mamlūk sultan, the formidable Qalāwūn (d. 689/1290), whose descendants governed Egypt and Syria, with two brief intervals, down until 784/1382, can be said to have founded a dynasty.⁴ In Delhi, prior to the so-called “Khaljī revolution” (which, by an odd yet totally meaningless coincidence, occurred in the very year that Qalāwūn died), the throne had been occupied first by Iltutmish and his descendants (607–664/1211–1266) and then by Iltutmish’s former *mamlūk* Ghiyāth al-Dīn Balaban and his family (664–689/1266–1290); but apart from the respective founders no member of either dynasty was a slave. (Perhaps appellations like “the Shamsid dynasty” and “the Ghiyathids” would be more useful.)

By comparison with their *confrères* in Egypt and Syria, the *mamlūks* in Muslim India have been sadly neglected. *Mamlūk* notables have been dealt with either in the context of the nobility in general, as for example in Nigam’s book (where slave status is not mentioned until p. 24 and then only

³ Minhāj al-Dīn Abū-‘Umar ‘Uthmān b. Sirāj al-Dīn Jūzjānī, *Ṭabaqāt-i Nāṣirī*, ed. ‘Abd al-Ḥayy Ḥabībī, 2nd ed. (Kabul, 1342–3 sh./1963–4, 2 vols), i, p. 410, tr. H. G. Raverty, *Ṭabaqāt-i Nāṣirī: a General History of the Muhammadan Dynasties of Asia* (London, 1872–81, 2 vols with continuous pagination), p. 497.

⁴ See Robert Irwin, *The Middle East in the Middle Ages: the Early Mamluk Sultanate 1250–1382* (London, 1986).

fleetingly),⁵ or in the course of a straight narrative of political events.⁶ This paper represents an attempt to understand the history of the seventh/thirteenth-century Sultanate in the light of developments in the near-contemporary empire based at Cairo. Such a comparison can, of course, only be partial: the two “Mamlūk” Sultanates differed considerably in many respects, including the nature of the *mamlūk* aristocracy itself. And there are admittedly problems attendant on a study of the Turkish *mamlūk* élite in India. One is the mutilation of Turkish proper names in the Arabic-Persian script (this includes nicknames, e.g. *qabaqulaq*, literally “he of the protruding ears”,⁷ which has generally been rendered “Qīqluq” or “Qutluq”). Another is the titulature employed at the Delhi court, which was largely consistent from one reign to another. Whether there was a recognised *cursus honorum* we cannot tell. But a particular proper name seems to be regularly linked with a particular *laqab*, e.g. Sayf al-Dīn Aybeg, Ikhtiyār al-Dīn Aytegin, Tāj al-Dīn Sanjar. And titles evidently did rotate, so that the same style, say, Qutluḡ Khān or ‘Ayn al-Mulk, might be borne by a succession of officers within as short a space as two decades. Unfortunately, this has sometimes been ignored by modern writers, who have assumed that they are dealing with one man when two or more are in question.⁸ It is only seldom that our sources help us by being more explicit, as when Baranī refers to Malik Qiran-i ‘Alā’i,⁹ i.e. “the Malik Qiran of ‘Alā’ al-Dīn’s reign”.

But the greatest problem is undoubtedly the dearth of sources, since the

⁵ S. B. P. Nigam, *Nobility under the Sultans of Delhi* (New Delhi, 1968).

⁶ Muḥammad ‘Azīz Aḥmad, *Political History and Institutions of the Early Turkish Empire of Delhi (1206–1290 A.D.)* (Lahore, 1949).

⁷ Jūzjānī, ii, pp. 25–7, 36 (tr. pp. 754–6, 780): in the very old B.L. MS Add. 26,189, the third letter is clearly *qāf*, and at fo. 186^v the name is spelled QBQLQ; cf. also India Office MS I.O. 3745, fo. 280^v. For the two words, see Sir Gerard Clauson, *An Etymological Dictionary of Pre-thirteenth-century Turkish* (Oxford, 1972), pp. 580–1, 621. A number of Turkish names encountered among Egyptian *mamlūks* are listed in Jean Sauvaget, “Noms et surnoms de Mamelouks”, *JA*, CCXXXVIII (1950), pp. 31–58; see also A. von Le Coq, “Türkische Namen und Titel in Indien”, in *Aus Indiens Kultur: Festgabe für Richard von Garbe...zu seinem 70. Geburtstag* (Erlangen, 1927), pp. 1–7.

⁸ For example, Ishwari Prasad, *A History of the Qaraunah Turks in India* (Allāhābād, 1936), pp. 5–6, identified a Malik Jawna in the reign of ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Khaljī with the future sultan Muḥammad b. Tughluq, who bore that title prior to his father’s accession in 720/1320. Yet Diyā’ al-Dīn Baranī, *Ta’rīkh-i Frāzshāhī*, ed. Saiyid Aḥmad Khān (Calcutta, 1860–2), p. 336, lists the first Jawna among the nobles who backed ‘Alā’ al-Dīn’s treacherous coup against his uncle and who survived only a few years thereafter; cf. also p. 248, where the reference to “the former Malik Jawna” makes it clear that this is an honorific. Ghulam Husain Yazdani, too, seriously believed that the Nuṣrat Khān of an inscription dated 669/1271 was the Nuṣrat Khān of the early years of ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Khaljī: “Inscription of Sultan Balban from Bayana, Bharatpur State”, *Epigraphia Indo-Moslemica* (1937–8), pp. 5–6. But we are in fact clearly told that Malik Nuṣrat Jalīsarī received this title on ‘Alā’ al-Dīn’s accession in 695/1296: Baranī, p. 242. In *ARIE* (1972–3), p. 14, Yazdani’s suggestion is refuted, but Nuṣrat Khān is wrongly equated with Balaban’s cousin Shīr Khān.

⁹ Baranī, p. 40.

student of mediaeval Indian history has access to nothing like the rich corpus of material (chronicles, biographies, administrative manuals, and biographical dictionaries) that is available for contemporary Egypt.¹⁰ From the rhapsodic passages on the Turks composed by Fakhr-i Mudabbir, writing in Lahore at the beginning of the seventh/thirteenth century, and by Minhāj-i Sirāj Jūzjānī, writing in Delhi a few decades later, we can infer that the qualities for which *mamlūks* were prized in India and in the West were identical: courage, extreme hardiness born of infancy in the steppe, steadfastness in Islam, and so on.¹¹ But it is impossible, for example, to document the training of the Sultanate's *mamlūks*, investigated in the Egyptian context by Dr Hassanein Rabie,¹² or even to compose a survey of the slave contingents in the army in the way that Professor Edmund Bosworth has done for the Ghaznavids.¹³ And we hardly ever know the precise point at which a slave was manumitted, because the sources fail to tell us¹⁴ (hence, at every occurrence of the word "slave" in this paper, please add: "or possibly freedman"!).

Moreover, a significant proportion even of what source material we do possess is unreliable. The early decades of the Sultanate are covered by Jūzjānī's *Ṭabaqāt-i Nāṣirī*. But from 658/1260, when that work was completed, down to the reign of Sultan 'Alā' al-Dīn Khaljī (695–715/1296–1316) – forty years or so which were of major importance in the history of the *mamlūk* institution in India – there are simply no contemporary chronicles (with the exception of two *mathnawīs* by the poet Amīr Khusraw: *Qirān al-sa'dayn*, recounting the meeting between Sultan Kayqubād and his father in 686/1287, and *Miftāḥ al-futūḥ*, commemorating the victories of Jalāl al-Dīn Khaljī in the years 689–90/1290–1). We are consequently thrown back on the mid eighth/fourteenth-century writer Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Baranī, whose *Ta'rīkh-i Fīrūzshāhī*, as Dr Peter Hardy has shown, is not so much a

¹⁰ Evidenced in the numerous articles on the Egyptian *mamlūks* in Ayalon, *The Mamlūk Military Society*, and in his other collection, *Studies on the Mamlūks of Egypt (1250–1517)* (London, 1977).

¹¹ Fakhr-i Mudabbir, *Shajara* (or *Bahr*) *al-ansāb*, partial ed. E. Denison Ross, *Ta'rīkh [sic] -i Fakhr-i Dīn Mubārakshāh* (London, 1927), pp. 37, 49–50; Jūzjānī, i, p. 410 (tr. p. 497).

¹² H. Rabie, "The training of the Mamlūk Fāris", in Parry and Yapp, pp. 153–63.

¹³ C. E. Bosworth, "Ghaznevid military organisation", *Der Islam*, XXXVI (1960), pp. 40–50; *idem*, *The Ghaznavids*, 2nd ed. (Beirut, 1973), pp. 101–6.

¹⁴ Jūzjānī, i, p. 373 (tr. p. 398), alleges that on Mu'izz al-Dīn's death in 602/1206 his slaves Tāj al-Dīn Yildiz and Quṭb al-Dīn Aybeg had requested manumission from the new sultan of Ghūr, his nephew Ghiyāth al-Dīn Maḥmūd. According to the same author, i, p. 444 (tr. p. 605), Ilutmish had been freed (before this!) by Aybeg on the express orders of Mu'izz al-Dīn. Baranī, p. 25, specifies that Balaban had been freed (*āzād shuda*): Khālīq Aḥmad Nizāmī, in Muḥammad Ḥabīb and K. A. Nizāmī (eds), *The Delhi Sultanat (A.D. 1206–1526)* (Delhi, 1970. *A Comprehensive History of India*, v), p. 281, is therefore incorrect in stating that there is no reference to his manumission.

chronicle as a series of highly impressionistic vignettes calculated to express the author's own view of morality and history.¹⁵

Jūzjānī dedicated his work to Sultan Nāṣir al-Dīn Maḥmūd b. Iltutmish, but he wrote as a client of the *de facto* ruler and future sultan, Ulugh Khān Balaban, who held the office of *nā'ib* or "viceroys", and he accordingly focuses attention on Balaban's master Iltutmish and on Iltutmish's slaves, the Shamsīs, to whose number Balaban belonged. The penultimate *ṭabaqa* (xxii) of the work comprises biographies of twenty-five of these slaves, and Balaban is accorded the longest biography of all. The subjects of the other notices range from slaves who had been purchased at an early date by Iltutmish, but were by now long dead, to Balaban's own brother and cousin. There are, however, significant omissions. The career of Balaban's great enemy Qutluḡ Khān is nowhere sketched.¹⁶ Only one of the biographies is devoted to a non-Turkish slave, the Indian-born Hindū Khān, and none at all to a free-born grandee. The Ghūrī *malik* Quṭb al-Dīn Ḥusayn b. 'Alī (d. 653/1255), for instance, is known twice to have held the office second only to the sultan, that of *nā'ib*. Yet he and other non-Turkish commanders are mentioned only in passing, in the biographies of their *mamlūk* colleagues.¹⁷

This pronounced slant of the *Ṭabaqāt* serves to obscure an important fact. Turkish slaves never enjoyed quite the monopoly of political authority in the Delhi Sultanate, even in the seventh/thirteenth century, that they did in Mamlūk Egypt. In different degrees at different times they had to share power with other groups, principally: (1) free-born immigrants, primarily from Transoxiana and Khurāsān (including notables from Ghūr and Turkish *amīrs*), whose entry into the Sultanate was accelerated in the wake of the Mongol irruption of 1219–23; (2) Khalaj tribesmen, originally from the "Garmsīr" of present-day Afghanistan,¹⁸ who were responsible for the establishment of Muslim rule over western Bengal around the turn of the

¹⁵ P. Hardy, *Historians of Medieval India* (London, 1960), especially chapter 2; *idem*, "Baranī", *EP*²; cf. also *idem*, "Didactic historical writing in Indian Islam: Ziyā al-Dīn Baranī's treatment of the reign of Sultan Muḥammad Tughluq (1324–1351)", in Yohanan Friedmann (ed.), *Islam in Asia*, i. *South Asia* (Jerusalem, 1984), pp. 38–59.

¹⁶ Were it not for an 'Alīgarh inscription of 652/1254, we should not even know his personal name (Balaban) and other honorifics: *RCEA*, XI (1941–2), pp. 258–9 (no. 4394). Nigam, pp. 41, 198–9, 203, follows the incorrect readings of the Nassau Lees ed. of Jūzjānī and hence confuses Qutluḡ Khān with Qilich Khān, a free-born noble who was the son of 'Alā' al-Dīn Jānī. For the same error, see also Nizāmī, in Ḥabīb and Nizāmī, pp. 262, 271–2; at pp. 262, 265, he calls him "Ḥusām al-Dīn" by confusion with yet a third person.

¹⁷ Jūzjānī, i, pp. 468, 489 (tr. pp. 661, 702). He had at one time been *wakīl-i dar* to Iltutmish, according to Baranī, p. 39. The same author, p. 113, tells us that one Shams-i Mu'īn composed volumes (*mujalladāt*) in commemoration of Quṭb al-Dīn; apparently none of this work has survived.

¹⁸ Vladimir Minorsky, "The Turkish dialect of the Khalaj", *BSOS*, X (1940), pp. 417–37, repr. in his *The Turks, Iran and the Caucasus in the Middle Ages* (London, 1978); C. E. Bosworth, "Khaladj. I. History", *EP*².

sixth/twelfth century, continued to feature in the heterogeneous armies of the Delhi Sultans thereafter,¹⁹ and from 689/1290 to 720/1320 provided the ruling dynasty; and (3) slaves of non-Turkish extraction, among whom particular mention should be made of Indians and black Africans (“Ḥabashīs”). To these three groups we might add the last two in order of appearance on the scene: (4) Indian converts to Islam; and (5) “neo-Muslims”, a term seemingly reserved for those Mongol immigrants who entered the Sultanate following the upheavals in the Mongol world after c. 1260. It is as yet too early to include (6) the Afghans, who are first being employed by Balaban as garrisons in newly constructed fortresses in the mid seventh/thirteenth century²⁰ but are not found in the higher *échelons* of the administration before the Tughluqid era.

What, then, do the sources tell us of the position of the Turkish *mamlūks* during the seventh/thirteenth century? Baranī begins his history with the reign of Balaban, but he prefaces it with some brief remarks about Balaban’s predecessors and the domination of the Shamsīs. During the reign of Iltutmish, he says, *maliks*, *wazīrs* and other notables (*ma’ārif*) came to his court to escape the Mongol terror. But after his death his Turkish *chihilgānī* slaves grew powerful and, through the weakness of his successors, were able to kill the immigrant grandees on every pretext: with their removal, the Shamsī slaves rose and became *khāns*.²¹ Who were the *chihilgānīs*? The question has been investigated by Professor Gavin Hambly, who reached no definite conclusion as to the origin of the term.²² At one point Baranī refers to “the forty” (*chihil*), and this led the later compilers Niẓām al-Dīn Aḥmad and Firishṭa to assert that Iltutmish had forty slaves:²³ their testimony is of dubious value, though it nevertheless gave rise to notions of a “college of forty”.²⁴ Yet we cannot be certain that these magnates were forty in number. Baranī on every other occasion uses the distributive

¹⁹ Jūzjānī, ii, p. 46 (tr. Raverty, p. 798).

²⁰ *Ibid.*, ii, p. 80 (tr. pp. 852–3). Baranī, pp. 57, 58.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

²² Gavin Hambly, “Who were the Chihilgānī, the Forty Slaves of Sultan Shams al-Dīn Iltutmish of Delhi?”, *Iran*, X (1972), pp. 57–62.

²³ Niẓām al-Dīn Aḥmad Bakshī, *Ṭabaqāt-i Akbarī*, i, ed. B. De (Calcutta, 1927), p. 78, and tr. *idem* (Calcutta, 1927), p. 93; Firishṭa, *Gulshan-i Ibrāhīmī*, lithograph ed. (Bombay, 1247/1831–2, 2 vols), i, p. 130. Possibly these authors were also influenced by ‘Iṣāmī’s story that Iltutmish was offered forty slaves by a trader: he bought them all except Balaban, the future sultan: *Futūḥ al-salāṭīn*, ed. A. S. Usha (Madras, 1948), p. 122, tr. A. Mahdi Husain (‘Alīgarḥ, 1967–77, 3 vols with continuous pagination), p. 238. In a similar tale transmitted by Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, however, the number of slaves the sultan was offered is a hundred: *Tuḥfat al-nuẓẓār*, ed. and tr. Ch. Defrémery and B. R. Sanguinetti (Paris, 1853–8, 4 vols), iii, pp. 171–2, tr. H. A. R. Gibb, *The travels of Ibn Baṭṭūṭa A.D. 1325–1354* (Cambridge, 1958–71, 3 vols so far with continuous pagination), pp. 633–4.

²⁴ Sir Wolseley Haig, in *The Cambridge History of India*, iii. *Turks and Afghans* (Cambridge,

numeral, which suggests, rather, that each of the *chihilgānīs* commanded a corps of forty *mamlūks*. This can only be a matter of conjecture, but we should notice in passing that in Egypt the royal *mamlūks* were divided into groups of forty, each under an *amīr ṭablkhāna* (so termed from the band that played outside his gatēs as a mark of honour).²⁵

Hambly reviewed a number of theories about the *chihilgānīs*, none of which, he observed, rested on any solid evidence. It is true that the bloody conflict described by Baranī is nowhere expressly mentioned by Jūzjānī, writing in 658/1260 when the hegemony of the Shamsī *mamlūks* was almost at its zenith. But the onset of the process is clearly visible in his account of the troubled reign of Rukn al-Dīn Fīrūz Shāh (633–4/1236), who, according to the eighth/fourteenth-century author ‘Iṣāmī, failed to accord his father’s Turkish officers sufficient attention.²⁶ Some of these Turks, it seems, had already shown their disenchantment with him by leaving the court and making for “Hindūstān”, but they were brought back: among them was Balaban-i Kh^wurd (“the Lesser” – the future sultan), who suffered a short spell of imprisonment.²⁷ And when Fīrūz Shāh set out against a group of rebel *amīrs*, the Turks mutinied in the Tarā’in region and slew a great many bureaucrats of non-Turkish (“Tājik”) extraction.²⁸ A few years later, on the deposition of Raḍiyya and the enthronement of Mu‘izz al-Dīn Bahrām Shāh in 637/1240, the Turkish *amīrs* took a further step to concentrate power in their own hands, with the institution of the office of *nā’ib* (viceroys), which was entrusted to Ikhtiyār al-Dīn Aytegin.²⁹ In 640/1242 the *wazīr* Muhaddhab al-Dīn began to give himself airs and tried to exclude “the Turkish *amīrs*” from all state business, whereupon they attacked and killed him outside Delhi.³⁰ In 653/1255, the Ghūrī *malik* Quṭb al-Dīn Ḥusayn b. ‘Alī, who had apparently been *nā’ib* during Balaban’s brief period of disgrace, was summarily executed soon after Balaban’s resumption of power.³¹

1928), pp. 61–2. A. B. M. Habibullah, *The foundation of Muslim rule in India*, 2nd ed. (Allāhābād, 1961), p. 346. K. A. Nizāmī, *Some Aspects of Religion and Politics in India during the Thirteenth Century* (Alīgarh, 1961), p. 127, n. 7, and in Ḥabīb and Nizāmī, pp. 232–4.

²⁵ Ayalon, “Studies on the structure of the Mamlūk army – II”, *BSOAS*, XV (1953), pp. 469–70, repr. in his *Studies on the Mamlūks of Egypt*.

²⁶ ‘Iṣāmī, p. 130 (tr. Husain, p. 248; though at n. 1 Husain wrongly lists the Turks in question as the sultan’s brother Ghiyāth al-Dīn and the rebel *amīrs* Sālārī, Jānī, Kabīr Khān and “Kīrjī” [i.e. Kūchī], none of whom except Kabīr Khān was a *mamlūk*).

²⁷ Jūzjānī, ii, pp. 49, 51 (tr. Raverty, pp. 802, 805). Raverty (p. 802, n. 2) was surely wrong to identify this obscure episode with the mutiny at Tarā’in (see below).

²⁸ *Ibid.*, i, p. 456 (tr. Raverty, pp. 634–5). Habibullah (p. 116) describes the victims ambiguously as the sultan’s “personal attendants”: this term applies more to the perpetrators.

²⁹ Jūzjānī, i, pp. 462–3, and ii, p. 23 (tr. Raverty, pp. 649–50, 750–1).

³⁰ *Ibid.*, i, p. 469, and ii, pp. 27, 42 (tr. pp. 662, 757, 787).

³¹ *Ibid.*, i, p. 489 (tr. p. 702; and see Raverty’s comments at n. 3 *ibid.*).

Thus far, then, other sources do provide corroborating evidence for Baranī's analysis. There are grounds, nevertheless, for regarding that analysis as somewhat simplistic. To speak of the Turkish *mamlūk* element without further qualification, as if it constituted a monolithic group, is misleading. In the first place, we need to distinguish between slaves who had attained prominence in the state apparatus, receiving perhaps a large *iqṭā'*, and those still maintained in the sultan's household (*bandagān-i khāṣṣ*), who tended, while on campaign, to be stationed in the centre (*qalb*) of the army. The slave officers of the household and of the sultan's own guard – referred to by Jūzjānī as “the Turkish *amīrs* and household slaves who were in attendance on the centre” or, again, as “the centre contingents and Turkish *amīrs*”³² – appear initially as a group with distinct interests of their own. Probably many of them were slaves purchased by Iltutmish at a relatively late date. One of the two men named as ringleaders at Tarā'in, 'Izz al-Dīn Balaban (subsequently entitled Kūshlū Khān), had been acquired in 624/1227; by the time of the sultan's death (633/1236) he had become *muqṭa'* of Baran.³³ But the *émeute* surely involved many others who had not as yet obtained important office within the private household of the sovereign. It is noteworthy that Balaban-i Kh^wurd had entered Iltutmish's service as recently as 630/1232–3 and at his master's death had risen no higher than the rank of falconer (*khāṣadār*), where he remained into the reign of Raḍiyya.³⁴ Of his brother, Sayf al-Dīn Aybeg (subsequently Keshli Khān), who seems to have been purchased by one of Iltutmish's envoys to Baghdad and Egypt in 629/1231–2, we are told that until Raḍiyya's reign he was simply a member of the private household.³⁵ Tāj al-Dīn Sanjar (the later Arslan Khān), who had been obtained from the same source and doubtless at the same time, was also a mere falconer until that point.³⁶ As we shall see, even these *mamlūks*

³² *Ibid.*, i, p. 456 (tr. pp. 634, 636).

³³ *Ibid.*, ii, p. 36 (tr. 778–9): he was purchased outside the walls of Mandōr. The title is *kūshlū[k]* (“strong”, “powerful”): Gerhard Doerfer, *Türkische und mongolische Elemente im Neupersischen* (Wiesbaden, 1963–75, 4 vols), iii, p. 639 (no. 1676).

³⁴ Jūzjānī, ii, pp. 48, 51 (tr. Raverty, pp. 801–2, 806): the meaning of *khāṣadār* was established by S. H. Hodivala, *Studies in Indo-Muslim history* (Bombay, 1939–57, 2 vols), ii, pp. 67–8.

³⁵ Jūzjānī, ii, p. 46, *khidmat-i dargāh-i khāṣṣ mīkard* (tr. pp. 797–8). This mission, during which he was purchased by Ikhtiyār al-Mulk Abū-Bakr Ḥabash, is doubtless identical with the embassy from India mentioned by an Egyptian chronicler *s.a.* 629: Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz al-durar*, vii, ed. Sa'īd 'Ashūr, *Der Bericht über die Ayyubiden* (Freiburg, 1391/1972. Deutsches archäologisches Institut, Kairo: Quellen zur Geschichte des islamischen Ägyptens, 1g), p. 305. The precise form of his title is obscure, but it seems to be identical with that borne by a Khwarazmian *amīr* earlier in the century: Juwaynī, *Ta'rīkh-i Jahān-gushā*, ed. Mīrzā Muḥammad Qazwīnī (Leiden and London, 1912–37, 3 vols. Gibb Memorial Series, xvi), i, p. 80, tr. J. A. Boyle, *The History of the World-conqueror* (Manchester, 1958, 2 vols with continuous pagination), p. 103 (though Boyle, n. 19 *ibid.*, erroneously equates Keshli with Kūshlū, as Barthold had done).

³⁶ Jūzjānī, ii, p. 34, with the reading *khāṣadār*, which is found also in the B.L. MS Add. 26,189, fo. 207^v (cf. tr. pp. 766–7, based on the alternative *jāmadār*, “keeper of the wardrobe”).

would not always act as a homogeneous group; but for the time being, at any rate, they seem to have been more conscious of what separated them from outsiders than of internal differences. Their status and aspirations would have set them not only against free-born nobles – including Turks – but even, on occasions, against the more senior *mamlūks* of Iltutmish.

Moreover, if the Shamsī *mamlūks* resented undue influence on the part of immigrant grandees and bureaucrats, their jealousy could also be provoked by the rise of slaves belonging to whoever of Iltutmish's progeny was on the throne. In the later Ayyubid and Mamlūk empires based in Cairo, it was the aim of each new sovereign to reduce the influence of his predecessor's *mamlūks* and to promote his own.³⁷ This was the case whether he was his predecessor's son or a usurper totally unrelated to him. The task had to be accomplished gradually and in circumspect fashion. The example of Tūrān Shāh, the last Ayyubid sultan of Egypt, shows us what could happen when subtle tactics were jettisoned: by endeavouring to bring in his own party too quickly, he alienated his father's Bahrī *mamlūk* regiment and precipitated his own downfall and that of his dynasty. The pattern of developments in Egypt raises questions about what was happening in Muslim India at a slightly earlier date. There is evidence that for a time the most serviceable instruments available to a new sovereign seeking to build up his own party were slaves of African origin. Raḍiyya, for example, relied excessively on her African (Ḥabashī) slave master of the horse (*amīr-i ākhūr*), Jamāl al-Dīn Yāqūt, so that in 637/1240 the Turkish *amīrs* mutinied, executed Yāqūt and deposed her.³⁸ 'Alā' al-Dīn Mas'ūd Shāh (639–644/1242–1246), too, is alleged by Jūzjānī to have listened to base nobodies; according to the later chronicler Sihrindī, they included Ḥabashīs.³⁹ In such cases, the antipathy of Turkish slave elements might also have had a racial dimension. Yet from time to time we glimpse a Turkish slave belonging to some former sultan other than Iltutmish, such as Begtemür Orkhān-i Ruknī (presumably a *mamlūk* of Sultan Rukn al-Dīn Fīrūz Shāh), who was killed fighting in Balaban's cause in 653/1255.⁴⁰ It may be that *mamlūks* of former rulers who had lost out on their master's downfall later retrieved their fortunes in some measure by

³⁷ Ayalon, "Studies on the structure of the Mamlūk army – I", *BSOAS*, XV (1953), pp. 208–10. For an earlier parallel, from the reign of the Ghaznawid Mas'ūd I, see Bosworth, "Ghaznevid military organisation", pp. 44–5.

³⁸ 'Iṣāmī, p. 134 (tr. Husain, p. 253). See also Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, iii, p. 167 (tr. Gibb, p. 631), who adds that he was a slave of hers. At one point Jūzjānī specifies that the mutineers were the Shamsī slaves: ii, p. 21, *mulūk-u umarā-yi turk ki bandagān-i Shamsī būdand* (tr. Raverty, p. 748, is misleading); but see below and n. 42.

³⁹ Jūzjānī, i, p. 471 (tr. pp. 668–9). Yaḥyā b. Aḥmad Sihrindī, *Ta'rīkh-i Mubārakshāhī*, ed. S. M. Hidayat Hosain (Calcutta, 1931), p. 34.

⁴⁰ Jūzjānī, i, p. 490, and ii, p. 29 (tr. pp. 703, 760).

enlisting in a new political constellation,⁴¹ and that such an opportunity was furnished by the split within the ranks of the Shamsīs themselves.

At no time, finally, did an identifiable party of Turkish *mamlūks* exclude free-born and non-Turkish elements. According to Jūzjānī, Ghūrī and “Tājik” as well as Turkish *malīks* were scandalised at the position of Yāqūt in Raḍiyya’s counsels.⁴² And of her successor Mu‘izz al-Dīn Bahrām Shāh (637–639/1240–1242), we are told, again, that he aroused the distrust of “Ghūrī and Turkish *amīrs*”.⁴³ Indeed, the structure of power that emerged following Bahrām Shāh’s overthrow bears the marks of a compromise between the different groups. At first, the leading figure among the rebels, Kūshlū Khān, endeavoured to have himself recognised as sultan. But he found no support: possibly the Ghūrīs and others resisted the succession of a Turkish slave, and his fellow-Shamsīs for their part were unwilling to jettison the family of their old master Iltutmish. The sultanate was accordingly settled on a son of Fīrūz Shāh, ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Mas‘ūd. The office of *nā’ib* was recreated and entrusted to Quṭb al-Dīn Ḥusayn, who presumably headed the Ghūrī *amīrs* offended by the late sultan; one of the senior Shamsī *mamlūks*, Qaraqush Khān, became *amīr ḥājib*; while Kūshlū Khān was consoled with an extensive but distant *iqṭā’*.⁴⁴

So far, I have tried to show that the picture given by Baranī of the reigns of Iltutmish’s first successors is simplistic and misleading. Later in his history, Baranī tells how Balaban destroyed his fellow-Shamsī slaves; and here – though perhaps because he is our only source – he would appear to be more reliable. Balaban’s rise dates from 642/1244 when he replaced Qaraqush Khān as *amīr ḥājib*.⁴⁵ In 647/1249 he became *nā’ib* and was granted the style of Ulugh Khān, and the sultan, Nāṣir al-Dīn Maḥmūd Shāh (644–664/1246–1266), married his daughter. Now for the first time we can witness the creation of a new party among the Shamsī slave establishment. The viceroy transmitted his office of *amīr ḥājib* to his brother Keshli Khān, and a number of other supporters were promoted: the Shamsī Tāj al-Dīn Sanjar *Teniz Khān, who invariably appears as a loyal henchman of Balaban, became deputy *amīr ḥājib*; Balaban’s own slave, Ikhtiyār al-Dīn Aytegin-i *mūī darāz* (“the Long-haired”), moved up to succeed Keshli Khān as *amīr-i*

⁴¹ As certainly occurred in Mamlūk Egypt: Ayalon, “Studies on the structure of the Mamlūk army – I”, pp. 217–20.

⁴² Jūzjānī, ii, p. 23 (tr. p. 750).

⁴³ *Ibid.*, ii, p. 164 (tr. p. 1133).

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, i, p. 468, and ii, pp. 20, 36–7 (tr. pp. 661–2, 747, 780). Habibullah (p. 124) was surely right to see some kind of coalition behind these arrangements.

⁴⁵ Jūzjānī, ii, p. 53 (tr. p. 809); earlier, i, p. 469 (tr. p. 664), the date of this promotion is given as 640/1242.

ākhūr; and so on.⁴⁶ The new regime proceeded in 648–9/1250–1 to make a concerted attack on Kūshlū Khān, who was deprived of all his *iqṭāʿ*s in favour of the viceroy's supporters and kinsmen: his holdings in Sind were secured by Balaban's cousin Shīr Khān, while Keshli Khān obtained Nāgawr.⁴⁷ From this point too we can discern the formation of an opposition faction, also led, it is important to note, by Shamsī. In 650/1252 Kūshlū Khān had his revenge when Balaban was dismissed and replaced as viceroy by Quṭb al-Dīn Ḥusayn Ghūrī; and in a general reshuffle of appointments his friends and family were demoted.⁴⁸ Kūshlū Khān and his allies, who included the shadowy Qutlugh Khān and the Indian eunuch ʿImād al-Dīn Rayhān,⁵⁰ shared out offices among themselves until Balaban was restored to favour in 652/1254.

Nigam sees the pattern as the elimination of rival elements such as Africans or Tājīks, leaving the Turks unchallenged, followed by a phase in which rival Turkish factions struggled for power but in a more restrained fashion, involving bloodless changes of regime and compromises.⁵¹ Whether the conflicts of the 1250s were in fact more restrained is questionable. Certainly there was no repetition of the massacre of 634/1236, which has the appearance of small-scale genocide; but we still see the political murders of individuals like ʿImād al-Dīn Rayhān and Quṭb al-Dīn Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī Ghūrī, who both perished following Balaban's restoration.⁵² In contrast, moreover,

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, ii, p. 60 (tr. pp. 820–1). For Keshli Khān, see also ii, p. 46 (tr. p. 798). *Teniz Khān's appointment and his support for Balaban are also mentioned at ii, p. 29 (tr. p. 759). His title is uncertain. Raverty rendered it as "Tiz Khān", and Ḥabībī's edition reads TR, but in the B.L. MS Add. 26,189, fo. 206^{r-v}, the "tooth" between T and Z has no diacritical points: for *teniz/dengiz* ("sea", "ocean"), see Doerfer, iii, pp. 205–7 (no. 1192); Clauson, p. 527. That Aytegin-i *mūl-yi darāz* was Balaban's own slave emerges from Baranī, p. 83.

⁴⁷ Jūzjānī, i, pp. 484–5, and ii, pp. 37–8, 46 (tr. pp. 689–90, 781, 783–4, 798). Ḥabībullah, pp. 134–5.

⁴⁸ Ḥabībullah, p. 126, was quite wrong to see the government during Balaban's eclipse in 650–2/1252–4 as a "non-Turkish administration" attempting to "overshadow" the Turkish element; see also pp. 132, 195. So too P. Saran, "Politics and personalities in the reign of Nasir al-Dīn Mahmud", *Studies in Medieval Indian History* (Delhi, 1952), p. 228, assumed that Balaban's enemy, the Indian-born Rayhān (see below), was opposed by "the Turks". Nizāmī, *Some Aspects*, p. 141, speaks of "the non-Turkish group"; and in Ḥabīb and Nizāmī, p. 262, he alleges, amazingly, that Rayhān "had no following among the Turkish officers and the public".

⁴⁹ Jūzjānī, i, pp. 486–7, and ii, pp. 63–4 (tr. pp. 693–4, 826–7). Quṭb al-Dīn's reappointment as *nāʾib* is not mentioned here, but he held the office in 653/1255 at the time of Balaban's return to power: *ibid.*, i, p. 489 (tr. p. 702).

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, ii, p. 66 (tr. p. 829), for the only details we are given of his origins. The fact that he was a eunuch strongly suggests that he too was a slave and cannot really be ascribed, therefore, to an emerging Indo-Muslim aristocracy as he has been in the past.

⁵¹ Nigam, pp. 37–8.

⁵² Jūzjānī, i, p. 489 (tr. p. 702), for Quṭb al-Dīn, whose *iqṭāʿ* of Mīrat was conferred on Balaban's brother Keshli Khān; ii, p. 46 (tr. pp. 798–9); i, p. 490, and ii, p. 70 (tr. pp. 703, 836), for Rayhān.

with the earlier period, the antagonisms of the 1250s gave rise to full-blown civil war. The sense of solidarity among the Shamsīs – what the Egyptian Arabic sources term *khushdāshiyya*, the group feeling conventionally associated with the slaves of the same master⁵³ – was remarkably absent, and the virulence of the struggle surprised not only contemporary observers but even the protagonists. When Kūshlū Khān was obliged in 648/1250 to go to relieve Uchch, which was under attack from Balaban's cousin Shīr Khān, he pinned his faith, we are told, on the fact that they were both “of one house and one threshold”.⁵⁴ In other words, since the two *amīrs* had been slaves of Iltutmish, he hoped to be able to reach some amicable arrangement. He was disappointed: Shīr Khān placed him in custody and captured the city. “Never could there be a more amazing case than this”, exclaimed Jūzjānī, describing how Balaban's forces and those of Kūshlū Khān and Qutluḡ Khān confronted each other in the neighbourhood of Sāmāna in 655/1257; “for they were all alike of one purse and messmates of one dish, between whom the accursed Satan had brought forth such discord”.⁵⁵ But Satan or not, discord there was – and it persisted until after Jūzjānī had laid down his pen.

There are grounds for suggesting, in fact, that the situation in the 1250s was not less, but more, dangerous because it could not be resolved merely by the mass disposal of a group of Persian bureaucrats; rather, it involved a contest between two more nearly equal parties, both of whom were capable of resorting to arms and, worse still, of calling in the Sultanate's Mongol enemies. Balaban and his followers regained power in 652/1254 by dint of allying with Sultan Maḥmūd's renegade brother Jalāl al-Dīn Mas'ūd, who had taken refuge with the Mongols some years before and had now returned from the Great Khan's court with a Mongol army.⁵⁶ Balaban's cousin Shīr Khān had also fraternised with the Mongols during the *nā'ib*'s eclipse, and following his return to India joined Jalāl al-Dīn at Lahore; though he subsequently expelled the prince and presumably reaffirmed his allegiance to Delhi.⁵⁷ The rival faction in turn sought Mongol protection. In 655/1257 Kūshlū Khān, who with his allies had been first defeated in Awadh and then

⁵³ D. Ayalon, “L'esclavage du Mamelouk”, *Israel Oriental Notes and Studies*, i (1951), pp. 29–31, 34–7, repr. in his *The Mamlūk Military Society*.

⁵⁴ Jūzjānī, ii, p. 38 (tr. p. 783).

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, ii, p. 73 (tr. p. 841).

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, i, pp. 488–9, and ii, pp. 66–7 (tr. pp. 699–700, 830–1). We learn more of his flight to the Mongols, and his return, from chroniclers writing in Mongol Iran, beginning with Waṣṣāf, *Taẓīyat al-amṣār wa-taẓīyat al-a'ṣār*, lithograph ed. (Bombay, 1269/1853), p. 310, whence the account given in Rashīd al-Dīn's history of India is derived; see Karl Jahn, “Zum Problem der mongolischen Eroberungen in Indien (13.–14. Jahrhundert)”, in *Akten des XXIV. internationalen Orientalisten-Kongresses München...1957* (Wiesbaden, 1959), p. 618.

⁵⁷ Jūzjānī, ii, p. 44 (tr. pp. 792–3).

thwarted at the gates of Delhi itself, turned his *iqṭā'* of Sind into a Mongol province by inviting in a representative of the Great Khan and dismantling the walls of Multān.⁵⁸ At the time when Jūzjānī wrote, the Sultanate might well have appeared to be in a state of disintegration. Why it did not disintegrate, we shall probably never know; but certainly Delhi's rulers had good reason to be grateful for the internecine war that tore apart the Mongol empire after 1260 and severely reduced the Mongols' striking power on the north-west frontier.⁵⁹

After 658/1260 Jūzjānī's voice falls silent. We know nothing of the last years of Nāṣir al-Dīn Maḥmūd Shāh, and for the reign of Balaban as Sultan Ghiyāth al-Dīn (664–686/1266–1287) our main source is Baranī, who alleges that Balaban endeavoured to uproot the great Shamsī slaves, of whom a number may have been poisoned,⁶⁰ and that those who survived did so only by virtue of his patronage.⁶¹ His cousin Shīr Khān, who held the *iqṭā'*s of Sunām, Lahore and Dēōpālpūr and was allegedly a bulwark against the Mongols, neglected to attend court either in Maḥmūd Shāh's reign or in Balaban's, for fear of an attempt on his life: eventually, c. 668/1270, the sultan had him poisoned too.⁶² Temūr Khān and 'Ādil Khān are also mentioned as former Shamsī slaves.⁶³ Temūr Khān succeeded to Shīr Khān's *iqṭā'*s of Sunām and Sāmāna, but had apparently been transferred elsewhere by the time of Toghril's revolt in Bengal.⁶⁴ 'Ādil Khān is at one point called "Shamsī 'Ajāmī" and hence is doubtless identical with the Aybeg-i Shamsī 'Ajāmī, the *dādbeg* (chief justice) of Nāṣir al-Dīn Maḥmūd Shāh's reign: his son Muḥammad left an inscription at Farrukhnagar in Gurgaon, dated 674/1276.⁶⁵ The ultimate fate of these two magnates is unknown. The Shamsī slave 'Imād al-Mulk, the *rāwat-i 'ard* (muster-master) and maternal

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, i, p. 494, and ii, pp. 38–40, 71–6 (tr. pp. 711, 784–6, 837–44). Qutluḡ Khān, concerning whose ultimate fate Jūzjānī says nothing, is alleged by Iranian authors to have sought refuge with the Mongols also: Waṣṣāf, p. 310. Tāj al-Dīn, "son of Qutluḡ Khān-i Shamsī", is later found in Balaban's service (Baranī, pp. 24, 83), but this must have been an earlier Qutluḡ Khān, probably the one who is known from an Abōhar inscription to have died in 635/1237–8: *ARIE* (1970–1), pp. 18–19, 119 (no. 4).

⁵⁹ For the effects of the Mongol civil war on relations with Delhi, see Peter Jackson, "The dissolution of the Mongol empire", *CAJ*, XXII (1978), pp. 239–41.

⁶⁰ Baranī, pp. 47–8.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 50, *az ḥimāyat-i Balabanī bar ṣadr-i ḥayāt mānda būdand*.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 65: the date given is 4 or 5 years after Balaban's accession (p. 64).

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 50; at p. 37 they are called Balaban's *khwājatāshān*, i.e. slaves of the same master.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 65, 83. *Pace* Hambly (p. 61), he is mentioned by Jūzjānī, but only in the list of Nāṣir al-Dīn Maḥmūd's *maliks* and *amīrs*, where he is called Temūr Khān Sonqur-i 'Ajāmī, *malik* of Kuhrām: i, p. 476 (tr. p. 673).

⁶⁵ *RCEA*, xii (1943), pp. 206–7 (no. 4711). For Aybeg's biography (down to 658/1260), see Jūzjānī, ii, pp. 40–2 (tr. pp. 788–91).

grandfather, incidentally, of the poet Amīr Khusraw, seems to have continued in office for some time and died naturally around 671/1273–4.⁶⁶

Balaban has been accused of sapping the roots of Turkish power in India;⁶⁷ but his purpose in destroying the Shamsīs was, of course, to substitute his own *mamlūks*. It was especially vital for him to establish a power-base, since his assumption of the sultanate represented the end of a dynasty which had been on the throne for nearly sixty years. Of the *mamlūks* of Balaban who attained high office, it is unfortunate that we hear most about those who suffered death or disgrace for exceeding their authority or for dereliction of duty. *Buqbuq, *muqṭaʿ* of Budaon, was executed for killing a chamberlain, and Haybat Khān, *muqṭaʿ* of Awadh, narrowly escaped the same fate for a similar offence.⁶⁸ The most notorious of Balaban's *mamlūks*, of course, is Toghril, who usurped control of the distant province of Lakhnawtī, proclaimed himself Sulṭān Mughīth al-Dīn, and obliged the sultan to march against him in person before he was finally overthrown in 680/1281–2.⁶⁹ Prior to this Balaban had hanged another of his *mamlūks*, Ikhtiyār al-Dīn Aytegin-i *mūl-yi darāz*, who was *muqṭaʿ* of Awadh early in the reign and bore the title of Amīn Khān, for his failure to crush the rebels.⁷⁰ But we know of at least one other *mamlūk* of Balaban who survived for longer: Ikhtiyār al-Dīn Begbars Sulṭānī, *bārbeg* (or *amīr ḥājib*) in the 680s/1280s and a regular campaigner against the invading Mongols.⁷¹ Others among Balaban's slaves left sons (designated as the sultan's *mawlāzādagān*, literally "the sons of freedmen") to be promoted, such as Ikhtiyār al-Dīn 'Alī b. Aybeg, the *sar-i jāndār*, who at the outset of the reign received the *iqṭāʿ* of Amrōha and was later moved to Awadh, and whose

⁶⁶ M. Wahīd Mirzā, *The Life and Works of Amir Khusrau* (Calcutta, 1935), pp. 29–31, 36–7; for his slave status, see Baranī, pp. 36, 114–15.

⁶⁷ E.g. by Nizāmī, *Some Aspects*, p. 143.

⁶⁸ Baranī, p. 40. The correct spelling of the former name is uncertain: the B.L. MS of Baranī, Or. 2,039, fo. 15^r, reads BQBQ, but elsewhere the diacritical points are obscured.

⁶⁹ For Toghril's slave origins, see Amīr Ḥasan Dihlawī, *Fawā'id al-fu'ād*, ed. Muḥammad Laṭīf Malik (Lahore, 1386/1966), p. 343; also Baranī, pp. 81, 83; 'Iṣāmī, p. 165 (tr. Husain, p. 292). His revolt is discussed by Habibullah, pp. 172–5. The campaign involving his overthrow ended with Balaban's return to Delhi on 5 Shawwāl 680/17 Jan. 1282, according to the *fath-nāma* in Amīr Khusraw, *Rasā'il al-r'jāz* (Lucknow, 1876, 5 vols in 2), v, p. 13.

⁷⁰ Baranī, pp. 83–4. A different version is given in Sihrindī, pp. 40–1, where Amīn Khān is said to have been given the *iqṭāʿ* of Lakhnawtī on the death of Tatar Khān, with Toghril as his *nā'ib*: the two later fell out and Amīn Khān was forced to flee.

⁷¹ Baranī, pp. 24, 61, 81, 88. The name is usually transliterated as "Bektars", but shows clearly in B.L. MS Or. 2,039, fos. 32^r, 47^r, as BYKBRS; for the same form in contemporary Egypt, see al-Ṣafadī, *al-Wāfi bi'l-wafayāt*, ed. 'Alī Amāra and Jacqueline Sublet, *Das biographische Lexikon des Ṣālahaddīn Ḥalīl b. Aibak aṣ-Ṣafadī*, x (Wiesbaden, 1980. Bibliotheca Islamica, 6j), pp. 187–8 (BKBRs). 'Azīz Aḥmad, "The early Turkish nucleus in India", *Turcica*, ix (1977), p. 101, is wrong to see *sulṭānī* in the reign of Ilutmish as the style of free-born immigrants: the suffix, as pointed out by Nizāmī, in Ḥabīb and Nizāmī (p. 224), always denotes a slave of the reigning sultan.

generosity won him the title of Ḥātām Khān and eulogies from Amīr Khusraw.⁷² The career of this noble illustrates one important difference between the system which obtained in the Delhi Sultanate and that in contemporary Egypt. In Egypt, the offspring of *mamlūks* were debarred from inheriting their status or their power. In the Delhi Sultanate, on the other hand, the son of a great slave officer was in no way a second-class citizen and might even succeed to his father's position.⁷³

Balaban as sultan did not, of course, rely exclusively on his slaves or on their progeny. He also placed in positions of power members of his own more immediate family,⁷⁴ and benefited from the renewed influx of refugees – this time Mongols – following the outbreak of civil war in the Mongol empire in c. 659/1261.⁷⁵ The Mongol *amīrs* in his service were sufficiently numerous and influential in the reign of his son Mu'izz al-Dīn Kayqubād (686–689/1287–1290) to attract the unwelcome attentions of the powerful *dādbeg* Nizām al-Dīn, who had them all arrested and executed.⁷⁶ But Nizām al-Dīn's primary objective was the removal of Balaban's old slaves and their descendants. Describing his policy, Baranī writes of the fears of the “*malīks* and slaves of Balaban, who were very numerous and had become the pillars of the monarchy of Mu'izz [al-Dīn]”.⁷⁷ He makes it clear that the *dādbeg*'s aim was to bring down the great military households (*khaylkhānahā*), and specifies at one point that the destruction of the Mongol *amīrs* had been followed by the arrest of many of Balaban's *mawlāzādagān*, who were bound to them by ties of marriage and friendship.⁷⁸ It looks as if Nizām al-Dīn, rather than the late Balaban,⁷⁹ did most to undermine the power and

⁷² Baranī, pp. 36, 118–19. His full name is given by Amīr Khusraw: Mīrzā, *The Life and Works*, p. 72. For the meaning of *mawlāzāda*, see Hodivala, i, p. 342.

⁷³ As Keshli Khān's son inherited his father's office (see next note). For the system in Mamlūk Egypt and Syria, see Ayalon, “Studies on the structure of the Mamlūk army – I”, pp. 456–8; more briefly in his “*Awlād al-nās*”, *EP*.

⁷⁴ His brother Keshli Khān seems to have been a loyal adherent during the reign of Nāṣir al-Dīn Maḥmūd and shared his temporary eclipse in 651–2/1253–4, and after his death in 657/1259 his office of *amīr ḥājib* was conferred on his son ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Muḥammad: Jūzjānī, i, p. 495 (tr. p. 713); Baranī, pp. 36–7, 113–14. Muḥammad in turn served Balaban well during the latter's own reign, though later it seems he aroused the sultan's jealousy. He was entitled Malik Chhajjū: Amīr Khusraw, cited in Mīrzā, p. 38; cf. also Baranī, p. 181. As Balaban's sons came of age, they too were given positions of trust: the elder, Muḥammad, received the *iqṭā'* of Kōl at an early date (Baranī, p. 66), and later Sind; the younger, Maḥmūd, entitled Bughra Khān, was allotted the *iqṭā'*s of Sunām and Sāmāna (*ibid.*, p. 80), and later Bengal c. 681/1283 after the suppression of Toghri'l's revolt (*ibid.*, p. 92). It is significant that, as Baranī points out (p. 82), both were tested by holding for a time an important command on the Mongol frontier. When Muḥammad fell in battle with the Mongols (683/1285), his son Kaykhusraw succeeded him at Multān (*ibid.*, p. 110).

⁷⁵ Firishta, i, p. 131.

⁷⁶ Baranī, pp. 133–4.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 131–2.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 134; and see also pp. 132, 133, for the *khaylkhānas*.

⁷⁹ As suggested, for instance, by Nizāmī, in Ḥabīb and Nizāmī, pp. 285–6.

influence of Turkish *mamlūks* and their families in the years immediately preceding the Khaljī revolution. Even so, members of Balaban's slave establishment were still at large after Kayqubād tired of Nizām al-Dīn's tutelage and had him murdered. It was "Balaban's slaves among the *maliks*, *amīrs*, nobles and military commanders" who despaired of the ailing Kayqubād at the beginning of 689/1290 and endeavoured to rule through his infant son, Shams al-Dīn Kayūmarth. Two of them, Aytemür *Kechhen and Aytemür Surkha, who after Nizām al-Dīn's downfall had obtained the important offices of *bārbeg* (*amīr ḥājib*) and *wakīl-i dar* respectively, were killed while opposing the Khaljī seizure of power.⁸⁰

Describing the advent of the Khaljīs to the throne of Delhi in 689/1290, the eleventh/seventeenth-century historian Firishta commented that

the sovereignty passed from the Turks, who were the slaves (*ghulāmān*) of the sultans of Ghūr, to the dynasty of the Khaljīs.⁸¹

Now nobody would claim that Firishta is the most reliable source for the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and I am certainly not about to do so. But it does seem that with this reference to slaves he has put his finger on the significance of the so-called "Khaljī revolution" in a way that earlier chroniclers did not. Baranī and Iṣāmī, in what are the earliest accounts of these events, speak in terms merely of the sovereignty of "the Turks". The Khaljī revolution in fact broke the hold enjoyed by a tradition that conferred power primarily (though not exclusively) on Turkish slaves and their progeny. It is important to realise that this was what was at stake rather than some question of race. The Khaljīs were Turks, ethnically speaking, but Turks who had entered the Sultanate as free men; and the struggle in 689/1290 was not so much between Turk and non-Turk as between slaves (and the descendants of slaves) and free men. That Balaban's dynasty had become a focus for his *mamlūks*' loyalty in turn and provided in their eyes the real key to their power is clear from the revolt at Kara of his nephew 'Alā' al-Dīn Muḥammad Chhajjū (Keshli Khān's son), which was supported by Balaban's old slaves (and by his *mawlāzāda*, 'Alī the *sar-i jāndār*) and which occurred only after Jalāl al-Dīn Khaljī had set aside the child sultan Kayūmarth and secured the throne for himself.⁸² After the insurrection had

⁸⁰ Baranī, pp. 170–1. For the role of the two Aytemürs in the events of 689/1290, see Habibullah, pp. 194–6.

⁸¹ Firishta, i, p. 153, *pādishāhī az turkān ki ghulāmān-i salāṭīn-i Ghūr būdand bi-silsila-yi khaljiyya intiqāl yāft*.

⁸² Baranī, pp. 181, 183; more details are given by Sihrindī, p. 63. For Malik Chhajjū, see above, n. 74.

been suppressed, Jalāl al-Dīn's nephew 'Alā' al-Dīn was sent to Kara as *muqta'*, and within a few years former supporters of Chhajjū are found there, encouraging the treasonable designs which led to Jalāl al-Dīn's murder in 695/1296 and the overthrow of his sons.⁸³ The impact of Jalāl al-Dīn's seizure of power is evident in the hostile attitude of the principal families of Delhi: it was some time before the new sultan was able to leave Kīlōkhri and to take up residence in the old city.⁸⁴ Early in the reign Balaban's *mawlāzādas* appear as a pool of "the disinherited", ready to attach themselves to any group which could promise a change of sovereign and hence a renewal of their prosperity. Jalāl al-Dīn was old; and when the party which had gathered round his eldest son, the Khān-i Khānān, lost its figurehead with the prince's untimely death in c. 690/1291, a means was sought of preventing the succession of Jalāl al-Dīn's second son, Erkli Khān. A plot was hatched to murder the sultan and to proclaim as *khalīfa* the dervish Sīdī Muwallih, whose *khānaqāh* had been frequented by the dead prince and who had been his mentor. The conspiracy, which was betrayed and suppressed, included Balaban's *mawlāzādas*, who were banished to outlying regions.⁸⁵

Yet the coming of the Khaljī dynasty did not spell the end for Turkish *mamlūks*. One at least of Balaban's *mawlāzādas* held office in the time of 'Alā' al-Dīn Khaljī,⁸⁶ though Baranī claims that, as a result of that monarch's policy, no descendant of Balaban's slaves or of his other officers remained alive in his day.⁸⁷ Certainly, the Khaljī sultans appear to have given preference to Indian slaves, like Malik Kāfūr Hazārdīnārī and Khusraw Khān, who usurped the throne briefly in 720/1320.⁸⁸ But after the end of the Khaljīs, the fashion seems to have changed once more. Khusraw Khān's murder of the last Khaljī sovereign, Quṭb al-Dīn, was avenged by one of the leading *amīrs*, Ghiyāth al-Dīn Tughluq, who became sultan (720–724/1320–1324) and founded a new dynasty. Tughluq himself was probably of slave origin,⁸⁹ and the Tughluqid era may have witnessed a renewed

⁸³ Baranī, pp. 187, 224.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 173, 175–7; cf. also p. 181.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 210–11. The episode is elucidated by Hodivala, i, pp. 267–8; and see also Simon Digby, "Qalandars and related groups", in Friedmann, *Islam in Asia*, i, pp. 67–8.

⁸⁶ Malik Qiran-i 'Alā'ī, the son of Haybat Khān (above, p. 353): Baranī, p. 41.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 48.

⁸⁸ On the Khaljī era, see the brief remarks in P. Hardy, "*Ghulām*: iii. India", *EP*, and 'Azīz Aḥmad, "The early Turkish nucleus", p. 106.

⁸⁹ The Indian historical tradition varies considerably regarding Ghiyāth al-Dīn's antecedents. There is an ambiguous reference in Amīr Khusraw, *Tughluq-nāma*, ed. Sayyid Hāshimī Farīdābādī (Awrangābād, 1352/1933), p. 136, to him as "freed" (*āzāda*). The earliest Indian author to give an unequivocal statement of Ghiyāth al-Dīn's slave origins is Firishta (i, pp. 230–1): A. Mahdī Husain, *Tughluq Dynasty* (Calcutta, 1963), pp. 16–18. But contemporary Egyptian sources testify that Ghiyāth al-Dīn had been a *mamlūk*: al-Mufaḍḍal b. Abī'l-Faḍā'il, *al-Nahj al-sadīd*, ed. and tr. Samira Kortantamer, *Ägypten und Syrien zwischen 1317 und 1341*

dependence on Turkish *mamlūks*. The evidence is unfortunately scanty and sometimes ambiguous, and if we are to believe Baranī, at least, the price of Turkish slaves had risen by several hundred per cent since the days of ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Khaljī, implying a reduction in the purchasing power of the sultans.⁹⁰ However that may be, Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, who spent some years at the court of Sultan Muḥammad b. Tughluq (724–752/1324–1351), claims that he had been collecting *mamlūks* in great numbers prior to his accession;⁹¹ and the contemporary encyclopaedist al-‘Umarī, writing in Syria but relying on several informants from India, credits him with 20,000 Turkish slaves.⁹² This is a relatively low figure and perhaps refers merely to the *mamlūks* in the capital, since according to Ibn Baṭṭūṭa there were 4,000 of the sultan’s *mamlūks* stationed at Amrōha alone.⁹³ The Moroccan traveller’s vivid description of Muḥammad’s processions suggests that many of his *amīrs* may have been *mamlūks*.⁹⁴ Among those who definitely were, we may number ‘Imād al-Mulk Sartīz, for a time *amīr* of Sind,⁹⁵ and Qiran Ṣafdar Malik (or al-Mulk).⁹⁶ Muḥammad’s successor Fīrūz Shāh (752–790/1351–1388) is said to have accumulated the extraordinary total of 180,000 slaves in the capital and scattered throughout the *iqṭā’*s: of these, 40,000 are said to have attended him as guards either on campaign or in residence.⁹⁷ What proportion of them were Turks, we are not told.

Much of what I have said – regarding their treatment of Persian bureaucrats in the 1230s and 1240s, for example, and their fratricidal struggles in the 1250s – will have cast the *mamlūks* in an unfavourable light. If we were to conclude by assessing their contribution to the Islamisation (on

(Freiburg i. Br., 1973. Islamkundliche Untersuchungen, 23), text p. 27, tr. p. 104, citing the *shaykh* Tāj al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Ḥasan al-Dillī; al-Ṣafadī, *al-Wāfi bi’l-wafayāt*, ed. Sven Dederling, *Das biographische Lexikon*, iii (Damascus, 1953. Bibliotheca Islamica, 6c), p. 172. For the date of Ghiyāth al-Dīn’s death and his son Muḥammad’s accession (usually taken to be 725/1325), see Jackson, review elsewhere in this volume (pp. 171–2) of M. Shokoohy (ed.), *Corpus inscriptionum Iranicarum*, pt. IV, XLVII. *Haryana*, I (London, 1988).

⁹⁰ Baranī, p. 314. The Egyptian encyclopaedist al-‘Umarī, however, was told (approximately two decades earlier) that Turkish slaves were still in plentiful supply: *Masālik al-abṣār fī mamālik al-amṣār*, ed. and tr. Otto Spies, *Ibn Faḍlallāh al-‘Omarī’s Bericht über Indien in seinem Werke...* (Leipzig, 1943. Sammlung orientalischer Arbeiten, xiv), text p. 27, tr. p. 53.

⁹¹ Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, iii, p. 211 (tr. Gibb, p. 654).

⁹² Spies, *Ibn Faḍlallāh al-‘Omarī’s Bericht über Indien*, text p. 13, tr. p. 38.

⁹³ Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, iii, p. 439 (tr. p. 763).

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, iii, p. 231 (tr. p. 665).

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, iii, pp. 94, 107 (tr. pp. 593, 600). The printed text adopts the reading *mamālik* (hence Gibb’s translation, “inspector-general of the mamluks”); but see the alternative reading *mamālik* suggested in the French editors’ note at pp. 458–9: Sartīz was clearly the muster-master (‘*ārid-i mamālik*’).

⁹⁶ On him see Hodivala, i, pp. 300–1. That he was a Turk is evident from his personal name (*qiran*, “he who slaughters”): Sauvaget, “Noms et surnoms”, p. 54 (no. 182).

⁹⁷ Shams-i Sirāj ‘Afīf, *Ta’rīkh-i Fīrūzshāhī*, ed. Maulavi Vilāyat Husain (Calcutta, 1888–91), p. 270, *chihil hazār banda har rūz dar nawbat-i suwārī wa-khāna ḥāqīr mībūdand*.

any definition of that term) of the subcontinent, it might still prove difficult to reach a positive judgement. Islamisation, of course, rests on a process of conquest and annexation of territory to the *Dār al-Islām*; and militarily the achievements of the *mamlūk* era were limited. As far as we can judge from the exiguous material at our disposal, the Turkish *mamlūks* may have seen their task as no more than the defence of the Muslim community against external pagan aggression and the replenishing of the treasury of God with booty taken on swashbuckling raids. Under their leadership Muslim arms penetrated nowhere near as far as in the Khaljī era, and territory was lost for a time both to independent Indian *rājās* and to the Mongols. At best, they may have secured Muslim control over districts closer to the centre – as did Balaban when he reduced Amrōha and the Mēwāt area immediately south of Delhi – while being obliged to relinquish a tenuous hold on more distant and less readily absorbed tracts like Ranthanbōr.⁹⁸ Perhaps the fact that the *mamlūks* tend to be overshadowed by their Khaljī successors threatens, in any case, to deprive us of perspective. Had they maintained some kind of unity, the *mamlūks* might admittedly have achieved more; but given the instability of the regimes at Delhi between the death of Iltutmish and the reign of Balaban, it is astonishing that they achieved what they did.

And yet to focus exclusively on the frontiers of expansion would be to do the *mamlūks* an injustice. On the credit side, it must be said that even plundering and punitive campaigns were accompanied by the implantation of Islamic institutions. When he reduced the turbulent regions of Kanpil, Patiyālī and Bhōjpūr in c. 665/1266–7, Balaban is alleged also to have founded mosques there;⁹⁹ so too had Sanjar-i Qabaqulaq in the Badaon area some two decades previously.¹⁰⁰ *Mamlūks* endowed *awqāf* and patronised poets and scholars.¹⁰¹ Of Balaban's enemy Kūshlū Khan, Jūzjānī is ready to testify, surprisingly, that he was “the support of the ‘*ulamā*’, the righteous, the good, and ascetics”.¹⁰² It is fruitless to ask whether such attitudes were determined by genuine (if conventional) piety or by expediency. Like the equally unappealing Norman warlords in the history of Western Europe, *mamlūk* grandees were doubtless capable of responding to either stimulus, and their pious displays may well represent a sincere attempt to offset their more brutal traits.

⁹⁸ See Habibullah, pp. 151–2, on Ranthanbōr, and pp. 155–6 on Amrōha, which, as he points out, first appears as an *iqṭāʿ* early in Balaban's reign. For the Mēwāt, see Jūzjānī, ii, pp. 78–82 (tr. pp. 850–6), and Baranī, pp. 55–7.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

¹⁰⁰ Jūzjānī, ii, p. 26 (tr. p. 755).

¹⁰¹ Nizāmī, *Some Aspects*, pp. 148–9, citing, among other testimony, the encomium by Baranī (pp. 119–20) on the generosity of the *khāns* and *maliks*, most of them Turks. For an example, see Jūzjānī, ii, p. 5 (tr. p. 724), on the pious foundations of Kezlik Khān (d. 629/1231–2).

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, ii, p. 36, ‘*ulamā*’ *wa-ṣulahā*’ *wa-ahl-i khayr wa-zuhhād-rā mu’taqid būd* (translation mine; cf. Raverty's tr., pp. 775–6).